Political killings and the ‘war on drugs’ in the post-Marcos Philippines

The Philippines has been characterized by persistent political killings since the end of Marcos's authoritarian rule in 1986. Today, the target in President Duterte’s ‘war on drugs’ might be new — drug dealers and users — but the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings is not.

Thousands have been killed in the ‘war on drugs’ since Duterte became president. Under his, and past administrations, there have been numerous killings of leaders and followers of the political left, including many operating legally, due to the persistence of an anti-communist ideology.

After Duterte withdrew from the peace talks with the communists in July 2017, killings of leftist leaders and followers have once again increased. This is similar to the Aquino (1986–1992) and Arroyo (2001–2010) administrations in which killings of leftists increased after the peace talks collapsed.

This workshop examines this enduring pattern of political killings across the six administrations after Marcos. It seeks to answer this question: Why do political killings persist, and why are they carried out with impunity?

The presentation will argue that there is a political utility for both the killings and the impunity. This analysis is drawn from the findings of extensive research that examined individual cases of such killings.

PROGRAMME

1.00 – 1:30pm  Registration

1:30 – 2:30pm  Research presentation and Q & A

   Mr. Danilo Andres Reyes, PhD candidate, AIS

2:30 – 2:50pm  Tea break

2:50 – 5:30pm  Input: Filipino women’s response at home and abroad

   Ms. Joms Salvador, Sec. General, Gabriela Philippines

   Workshops, plenary & resolutions

About the speaker:
Danilo Andres Reyes is a PhD candidate at the Department of Asian and International Studies (AIS), City University of Hong Kong (CityU). He completed his Master of Laws in Human Rights (LLM-HR) at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). He is a recipient of Li Po Chun Charitable Trust Fund Scholarship (for postgraduate students) 2016/17, Outstanding Academic Performance Award (CityU), 2016/17 and 2017 Asian Graduate Student Fellowship (NUS). His recent academic paper on killings under Duterte’s ‘war on drugs’ was published in Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs (JCSAA).